



International Museum of Surgical Science
A Division of the International College of Surgeons

Breathe, Fibres of Papers Past

March 12 – June 13, 2021

Breathe, Fibres of Papers Past is a solo exhibition by Fall 2020 Artist-in-Residence Kioto Aoki constructed in conversation with the collections of the International Museum of Surgical Science. The exhibition intertwines the histories of medical imaging, anatomy, physiology, the museum's origin and physical architecture through the technological studies and processes of analogue photography. Adjacent explorations of the physicality of the body and the photographic image proposes Aoki's work as a sinew that negotiates the poetic ambiguities of embodied time – whilst considering the notion of *fibre* in biological, material, conceptual and historical contexts.

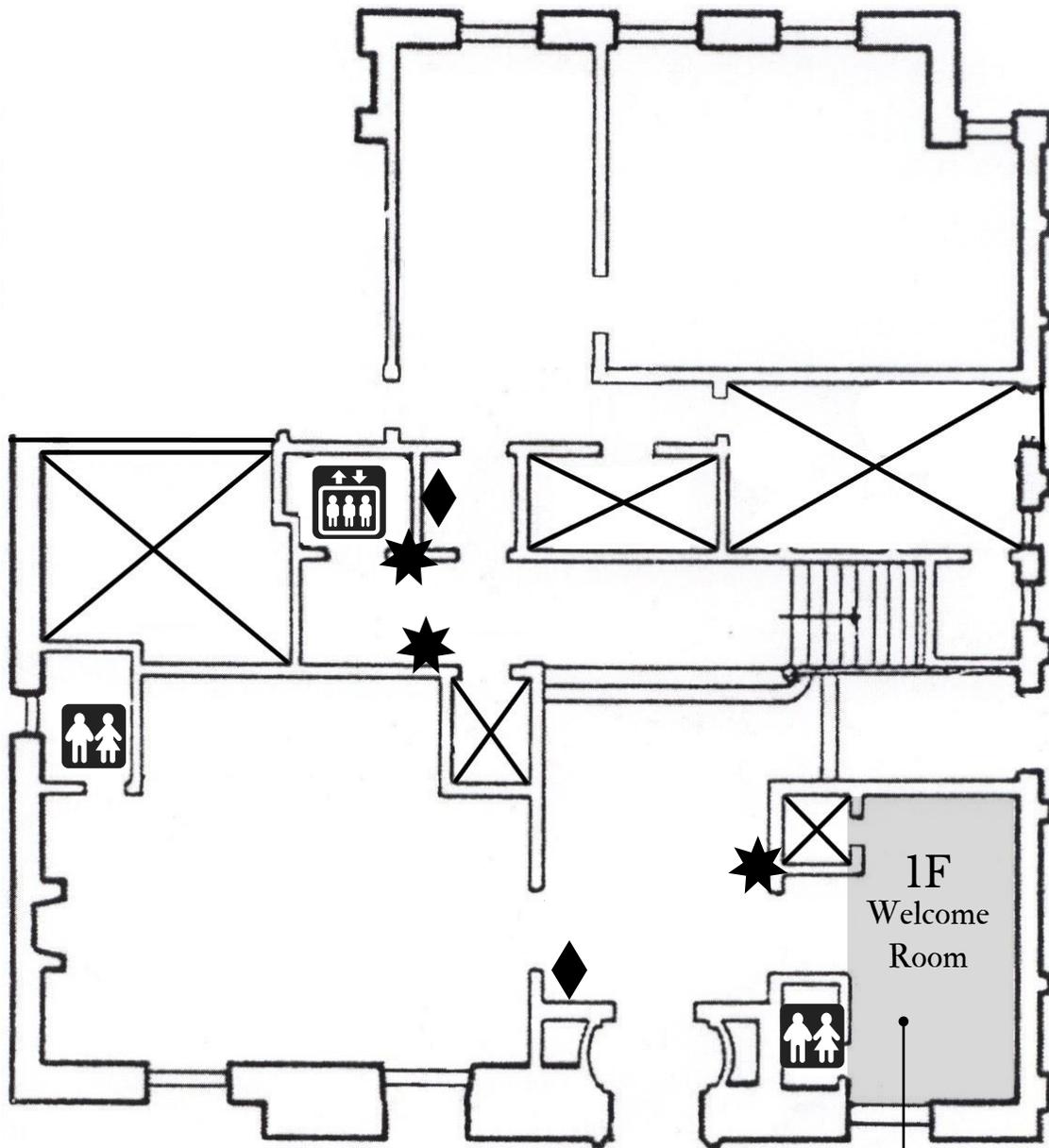
The International Museum of Surgical Science is housed in a four-story landmarked Chicago mansion built in 1917 for socialite and philanthropist Eleanor Robinson Countiss as a family home. The design for the mansion was inspired by the Le Petit Trianon chateau on the grounds of Versailles completed in 1770, which Eleanor had visited during her travels to Europe. The fortune to fund the construction of the home was provided by her father, John Kelly Robinson, an executive at The Diamond Match Company. The Diamond Match Company was founded by Eleanor's grandfather George Barber in Ohio and became the largest match manufacturer in the late 19th century.

The mansion was later acquired from the family in the early 1950s by the International College of Surgeons (ICS) founded in 1935 by surgeon Dr. Max Thorek and headquartered next door. The goal of the ICS was to promote a global exchange of surgical knowledge. Initially conceived as the ICS Hall of Fame, the museum eventually expanded to become a repository for its growing collection of historically significant surgical instrumentation, artworks and manuscripts from surgeons, collectors and institutions.

Together with Dr. Solomon Greenspahn, Dr. Thorek founded the American Hospital primarily to support low-income patients in 1917 – the same year the Countiss Mansion was completed. His professional endeavors are chronicled in his autobiography, *A Surgeon's World*. Dr. Thorek was also an accomplished photographer, participating in photography salons worldwide. He published two photography books, *Creative Camera Art* (1937) and *Camera Art as a Means of Self-Expression* (1947), detailing the technical aspects of the paper negative process and aesthetic concerns of the Pictorialist photographer.

Breathe, Fibres of Papers Past begins with an homage to these two historical narratives and continues throughout the four floors of the museum. The exhibition responds to these intertwined histories by engaging objects from the museum's permanent collection, which include original blueprints of the mansion and a variety of medicinal and photographic material. By pulling together varied physical and textual sources, Aoki reveals the layered architectural, historical, and haptic relationships that compose a place.

Official Exhibition Guide: 1st Floor



*See 1F Gallery Guide
on next page

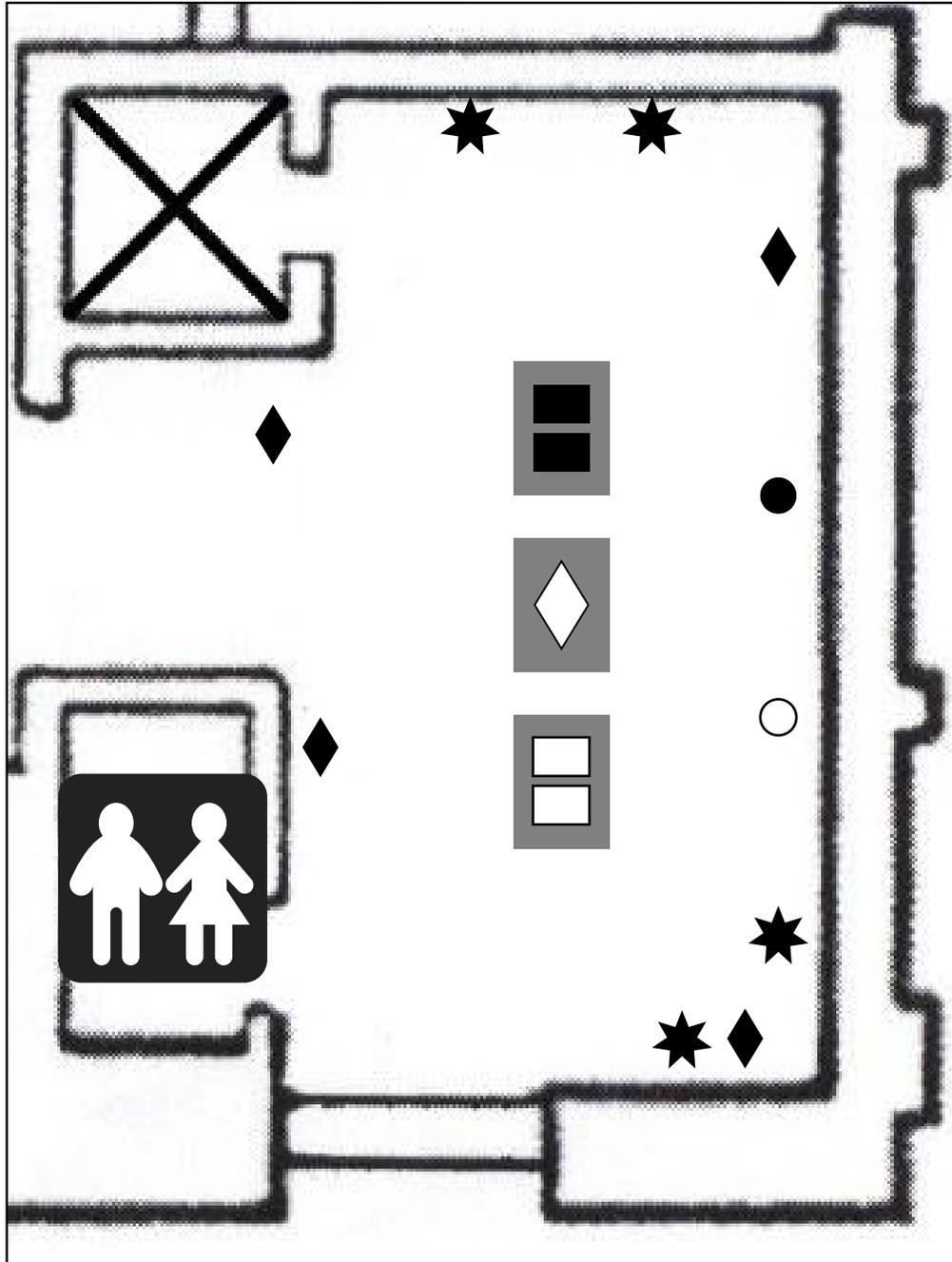


Diamond Tin Series - photographs of the Countiss Mansion made with the Diamond Camera [gelatin silver prints from paper negatives]



Anatomy of - Sectional cyanotypes created from original architectural drawings of the Countiss Mansion from 1916

****1F Gallery Guide:***



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photographs of the Countiss Mansion
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 **Anatomy Of** - Sectional cyanotypes
created from original architectural
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 Dr. Thorek business
card & trophy

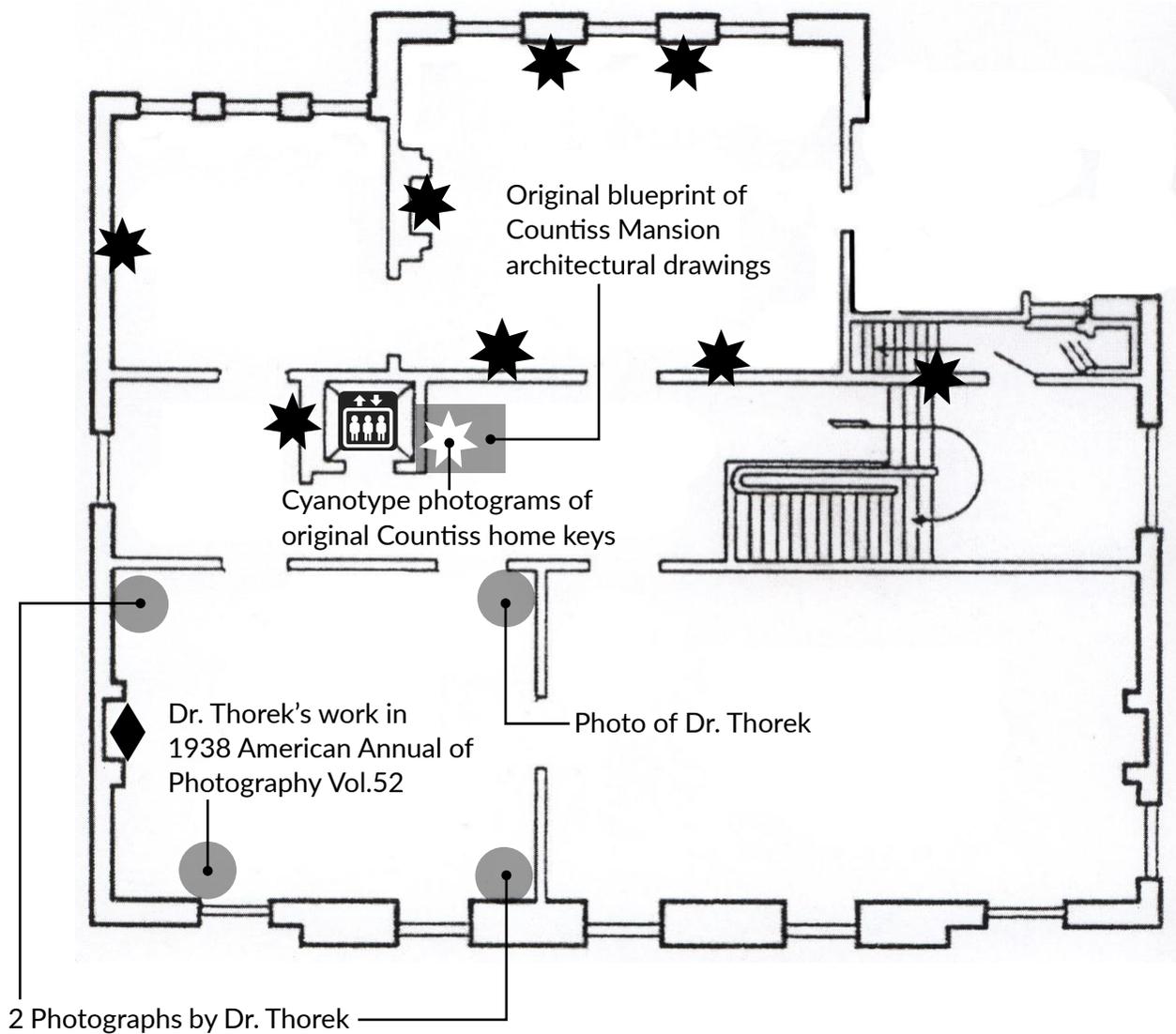
 Photograph by
Dr. Thorek

 Books

 Diamond Camera –
pinhole camera made
from a Diamond Match

 Dr. Thorek CV

2nd Floor

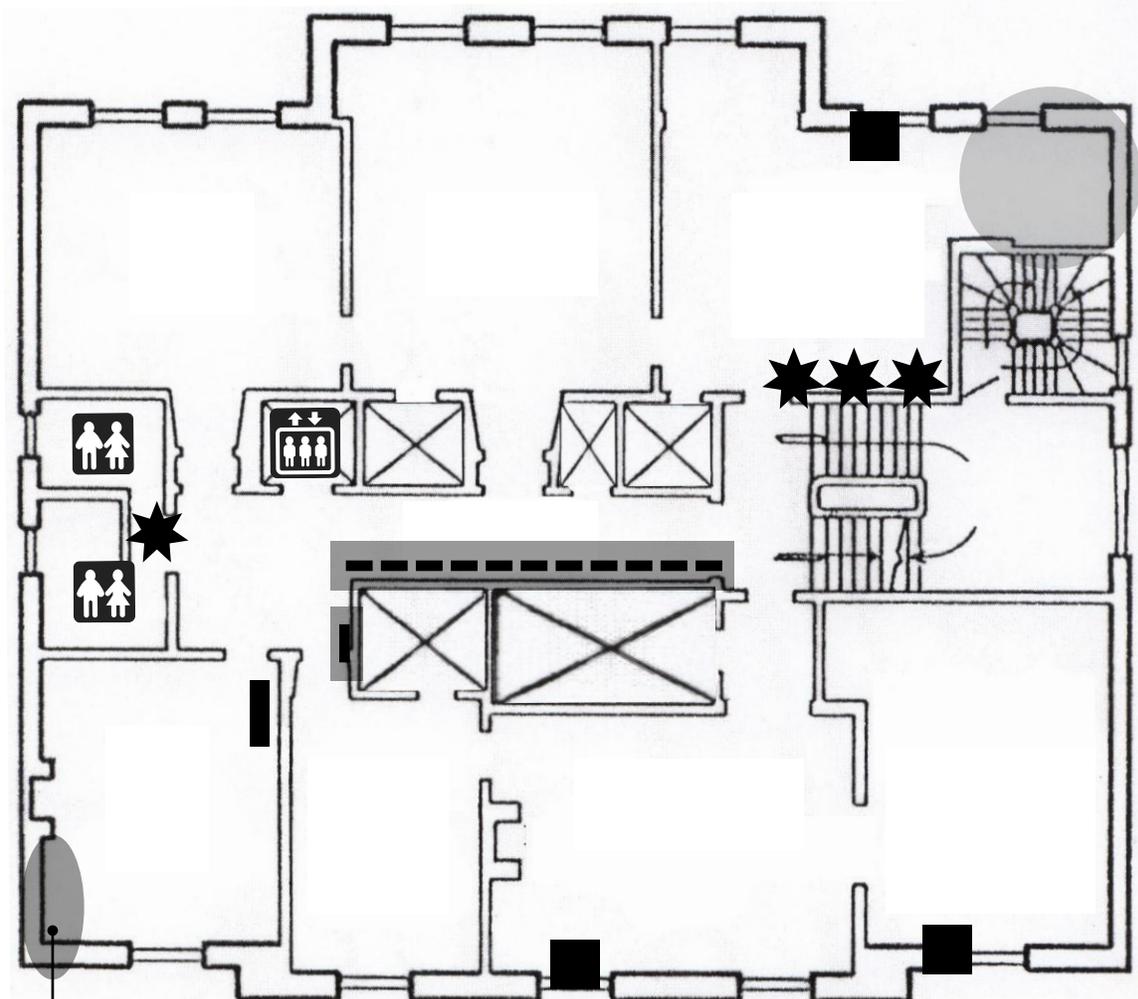


Diamond Tin Series - photographs of the Countiss Mansion made with the Diamond Camera [gelatin silver prints from paper negatives]



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3rd Floor



Countiss Countiss



Anatomy Of - Sectional cyanotypes created from original architectural drawings of the Countiss Mansion from 1916



Photograms on x-ray film against windows & light box

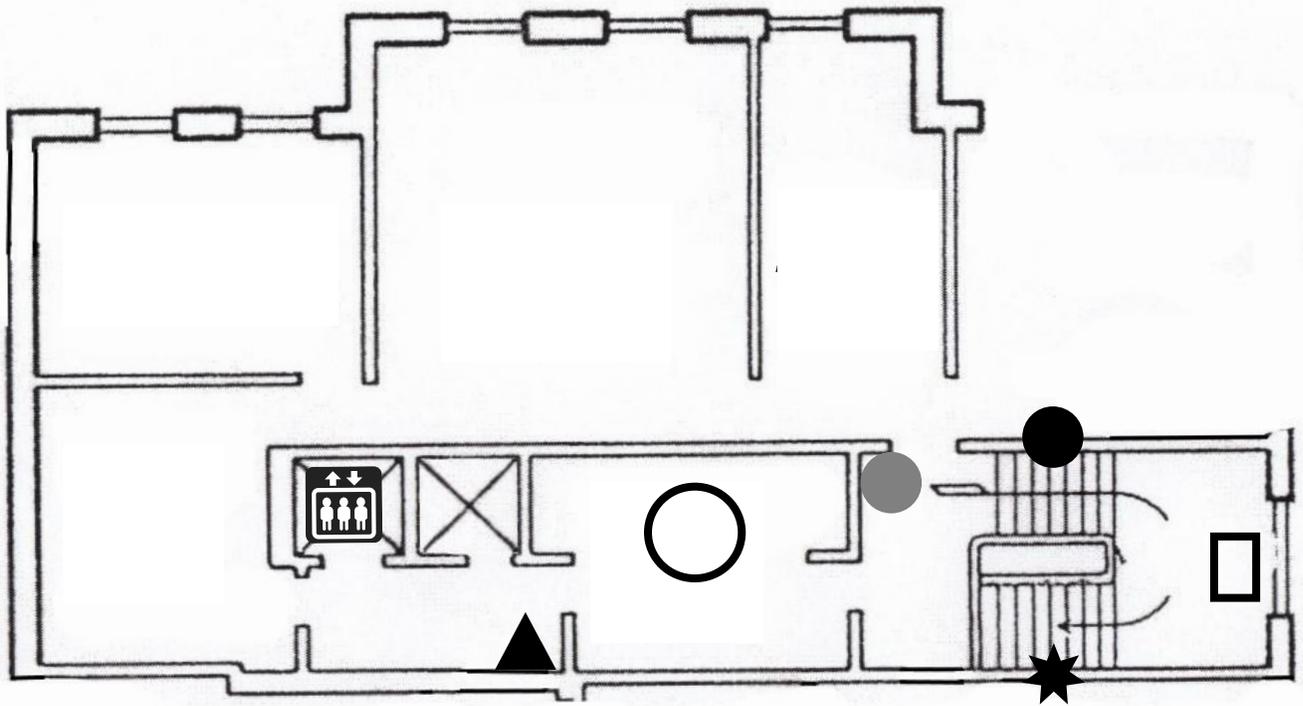


Wall of Fame in Japan Room



Appears to Be - A series of sequential images where exposure is determined by the number of breaths taken, ascending from one to twelve. Frames created by former respiratory therapist Steve Ducklow [gelatin silver prints]

4th Floor



(untitled) - Rear exterior view of the Countiss Mansion
[gelatin silver print]



Signature Bun - Photograms hung at artist bun height
[artist's hair, gelatin silver prints]



Not a Realist - stereograph cards created without a stereographic camera
[gelatin silver prints]



Sightline Sitaline - panorama photographed from the mansion rooftop with the Henry Clay Camera [gelatin silver prints from paper negatives]



Anatomy of - Sectional cyanotypes created from original architectural drawings of the Countiss Mansion from 1916



Henry Clay Camera from IMSS's permanent collection. Camera manufactured between 1891 - 1899

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Special Thanks: Aoki Family, Kiyomi Negi, XiZi Hua, Jennifer Chen-su Huang, Steve Ducklow, Yoko Kawaguchi, Sherwin Ovid, Lauren Deutsch, Miranda Pettengill, Shannon Fox, Asian Improv aRts Midwest

Kioto Aoki is an artist and educator using the material specificity of the analogue image and image-making process to explore modes of perception as a politics of vision. Her photographic work oscillates between the still and the moving image, attentive to the apparatus of the human eye and the camera; while installation and artist book works engage mechanisms of structural tangibility and site-specificity. Forming a rhetoric of nuanced quietude, her practice considers the intimacies of vision through the experience of sight from inception through presentation.

As a musician, Kioto descends from the Toyoakimoto performing arts family in Tokyo with roots dating back to the Edo period. Studying under her Tokyo-born father, Kioto is carrying on the artistic family lineage in Chicago as sole professional taiko artist in the city. She has been performing on stage since the age of 7 and also plays shamisen and tsuzumi. Kioto plays in both traditional and contemporary musical contexts and is active within the experimental and creative music communities in Chicago and the Bay Area. She also leads the National Gintenkai Project – the performance unit within Tsukasa Taiko, the Japanese drumming program at Asian Improv aRts Midwest.

She has exhibited in Chicago, Berlin, Los Angeles, San Francisco, London and Japan. Her work is held in the Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Library. Musical projects include Yoko Ono's SKYLANDING, Tatsu Aoki's The MIYUMI Project, The Reduction Ensemble, and the Taiko Legacy / Reduction series at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Kioto is also a multi-year Ethnic and Folk Arts Master Apprentice Program Awardee from the Illinois Arts Council. Curatorial projects include the ongoing Chicago Obihiro Exchange Project and 思考回路 • *Shikoukairo: Patterns of Thought* which reframes the conversation around Asian & Asian-American cultural diegesis in the arts.

Learn more at: kiotoaoki.com

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